

Iranian security forces purportedly fire live ammunition to disperse protesters despite Trump's warning

Videos emerged online Monday that purportedly show Iranian police and security forces firing live ammunition to disperse demonstrators protesting against the Islamic Republic after the country mistakenly downed a Ukrainian airline plane shortly after takeoff from Tehran.

There was no immediate report in Iranian state-run media on the incident near Azadi, or Freedom, Square in Tehran, but, if true, could be seen as an act of defiance against President Trump who warned the regime against the use of deadly force.

Trump late Sunday tweeted in Farsi that a combination of protests and sanctions have “choked off” Iran and said Tehran will be forced to the negotiation table.

Trump insisted that he “couldn’t care less” if the regime negotiates, but he appeared to lay down non-negotiable issues that included the development of nuclear weapons and the use of deadly force against protesters.



Donald J. Trump@realDonaldTrump

National Security Adviser suggested today that sanctions & protests have Iran “choked off”, will force them to negotiate. Actually, I couldn’t care less if they negotiate. Will be totally up to them but, no nuclear weapons and “don’t kill your protesters.”

“Don’t kill your protesters,” he tweeted.

Videos were sent to the New York-based Center for Human Rights in Iran and

later verified by The Associated Press. They show a crowd of demonstrators fleeing as a tear gas canister landed among them. People cough and sputter while trying to escape the fumes, with one woman calling out in Farsi: "They fired tear gas at people! Azadi Square. Death to the dictator!"

Another video shows a woman being carried away in the aftermath as a blood trail can be seen on the ground. Those around her cry out that she has been shot by live ammunition in the leg.

"Oh my God, she's bleeding nonstop!" one person shouts. Another shouts: "Bandage it!"

Photos and video after the incident show pools of blood on the sidewalk.

Hossein Rahimi, the head of the Tehran police, said in a statement seen by Reuters that police "absolutely did not shoot" due to orders to show restraint.

US TROOPS PRAISE GENERAL'S KILLING, COTTON SAYS

The tweet in Farsi appears to be an attempt by Trump to speak directly to the Iranian people. Tehran has experienced upheaval after the missile strike on a Ukrainian airline flight out of the country's capital that the country called a mistake. Still, the mishap was seen as an international display of military ineptitude.

Many of the country's protesters chanted "death to the Dictator," referring to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Another group near a university in Tehran chanted, "They are lying that our enemy is America, our enemy is right here," Reuters reported

Trump, who says he is not interested in ousting the Iranian regime, reinstated economic sanctions on Iran after withdrawing from the nuke deal. He said it gave Tehran too many economic benefits without doing enough to prevent Iran from eventually developing a nuclear weapon.

Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, the head of the Revolutionary Guard's aerospace division, said his unit accepts "full responsibility." Iranian officials had earlier denied that it had shot down the jet.

General Hossein Salami, commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, apologized,

according to CBS News, citing Iran's state TV.

"I swear to almighty God that I wished I were in that plane and had crashed with them and had burned, and had not witnessed this tragic incident," Salami said.

Alam Saleh, an Iran expert, told the Wall Street Journal that the state's legitimacy has been "severely challenged by the people."

Trump, hours earlier, again warned Tehran not to kill protesters, saying, "Thousands have already been killed or imprisoned by you, and the World is watching. More importantly, the USA is watching."

Karen Pierce, the British ambassador to the United Nations, echoed Trump's message to Iran.

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"The important thing is that... the Iranian government needs to listen to its people and it needs to de-escalate the current situation... that's in their hands," Pierce said Sunday on "America's News HQ."

Fox News' Yael Halon and the Associated Press contributed to this report

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<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-tweets-again-in-farsi-says-iran-has-been-choked-off-by-sanctions-protests>

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